

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the present amendments and following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-45 are pending in this case. Claims 1, 15, 29, and 43-45 are amended, and the amendments are supported in the originally-filed disclosure at least at Fig. 1, which depicts sensors 400 and 11 and sheet separation roller 10, and at paragraph [0046] of the published specification. Thus, no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-12, 14-26, 28-40, and 42-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Jacobson, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,924,686, herein "Jacobson"), in view of Sashida (U.S. Patent No. 6,788,440 B1); and Claims 13, 27, and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Jacobson, in view of Sashida, further in view of Hamamoto, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,421,581 B1, herein "Hamamoto").

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Amended Claim 1 is directed to a sheet feeding device and includes, *inter alia*, "**at least two detecting devices, both located before the sheet separating device, side-by-side, substantially in line in the sheet feeding direction.**"

The outstanding Office Action asserts a combination of Jacobson and Sashida as teaching every element of Claim 1.

However, neither Jacobson nor Sashida teaches or suggests at least the above-quoted features of Claim 1. As depicted at Fig. 1 of Jacobson, only one sensor 50 is in line in the sheet feeding direction. As depicted at Fig. 4 of Sashida, sensors S1 and S2, asserted as teaching the at least two detecting devices as defined by Claim 1, are not "both located before the sheet separating device, side-by-side, substantially in line in the sheet feeding direction."

Instead, separating roller 261 and feed roller 221 of Sashida, asserted as teaching the sheet separating device as defined by Claim 1, are both between sensors S1 and S2.

Because Jacobson and Sashida, taken in combination, do not teach or suggest all the elements of Claim 1, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

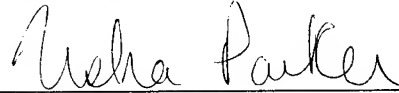
Claims 2-28 depend from Claim 1 and, therefore, patentably define over the combination of Jacobson and Sashida for at least the same reasons as Claim 1. Further, Hamamoto, which is additionally cited against Claim 13, does not cure the deficiencies of Jacobson and Sashida and, further, is not cited for the features of Claim 1 deficient in the combination of Jacobson and Sashida. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of Claims 2-28 be withdrawn.

Claims 15, 29, and 43-45, though differing in scope and statutory subject matter from Claim 1, patentably define over the combination of Jacobson and Sashida and Hamamoto for similar reasons as Claim 1. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of Claim 15, Claims 16-28, which depend therefrom, Claim 29, Claims 30-42, which depend therefrom, and Claims 43-45 be withdrawn.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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